

FAMOUS 1950s EC COMICS!



NO. 12
JUNE



200
275
CANADA

SHOCK

®

SUSPENSTORIES



JOLTING TALES OF
TENSION
IN THE
 **TRADITION!**

ELDSTEIN

DEADLINE

YOU STAND AND YOU LISTEN TO THE DIN OF CHATTERING TYPEWRITERS AND VOICES SCREAMING INTO TELEPHONES AND THE THUNDER OF THE PRESSES ABOVE. YOU LISTEN TO THE FRANTIC UPROAR OF THE HUMANITY AND THE MACHINERY THAT CONSTITUTE A BUSY NEWSPAPER OFFICE. THE SOUND IS MUSIC TO YOUR EARS, LAWRENCE GREIG. THE SMELL OF INK AND SWEAT AND STALE CIGARETTE SMOKE IS PERFUME. YOU STAND WITH YOUR HAT IN YOUR HAND AND YOUR HEAD BOWED AND YOU INHALE THAT PERFUME AND YOU LISTEN TO THAT MUSIC. YOU STAND BEFORE THE DESK OF PAUL MASON... MANAGING EDITOR OF 'THE GLOBE'... AND YOU CRAWL...

JUST GIVE ME **ONE MORE CHANCE**, PHIL! ALL I **NEED** IS A **BREAK!** I'VE **REFORMED!** I **SWEAR IT!** WASN'T I THE **BEST DARN REPORTER** YOU **EVER HAD?** DIDN'T I **BRING IN** THAT **CITY HALL STORY?** DIDN'T I **BUST OPEN** THE **MILLER MOB...** DIDN'T I...

A LOT OF **GIN'S** PASSED OVER THE BAR SINCE **THEN, LARRY!**



YOU'RE LARRY GRIEG. YOU'RE SLOPPY AND UNSHAVEN AND YOUR LAST HUNDRED DOLLAR SUIT HANGS LIKE AN OLD BURLAP SACK ON YOUR SAGGING SHOULDERS. PHIL'S CRACK CUTS DEEP...

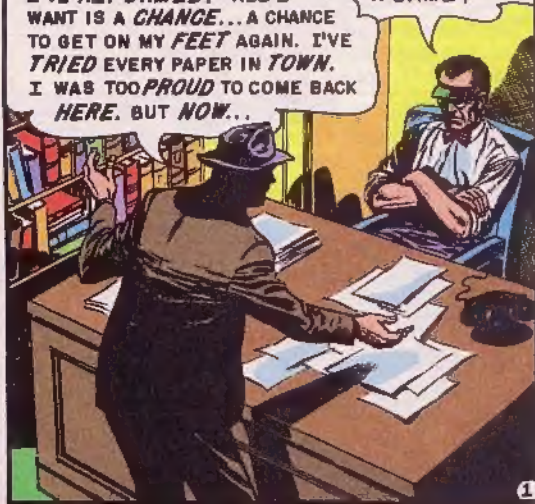
THAT WASN'T **NICE, PHIL!**

LISTEN, LARRY, THERE ISN'T **ANOTHER** PAPER IN TOWN'LL **TOUCH** YOU. WHY SHOULD I **GIVE** YOU A **BREAK?** YOU'LL TAKE YOUR **FIRST WEEK'S PAY** AND GO GET YOURSELF **TANKED** AND...



I'M NOT **LIKE** THAT ANY **MORE**, PHIL! I **QUIT** DRINKING! I **HAVEN'T TOUCHED** A **DROP** FOR A **WEEK!** I **TOLD** YOU! I'VE **REFORMED!** ALL I WANT IS A **CHANCE...** A CHANCE TO GET ON MY **FEET** AGAIN. I'VE **TRIED** EVERY PAPER IN **TOWN**. I WAS **TOO PROUD** TO COME BACK **HERE**. BUT **NOW...**

WHAT'S THE **PITCH, LARRY?** WHY THE **SUDDEN CHANGE?** MEET A **DAME?**



YOU STIFFEN. YOU THINK OF ANNIE... MYSTERIOUS, LUSCIOUS, DESIRABLE ANNIE...

HOW... DID YOU KNOW, PHIL?

WHAT ELSE?

YOU THINK OF ANNIE COMING INTO THAT BAR LAST WEEK AND SLIPPING UP ONTO THE STOOL BESIDE YOU...

HI! YOU LOOK LONESOME! MIND IF I JOIN YOU?

HUH? ME? YOU TALKIN' TIME?

BLONDE, BEAUTIFUL ANNIE. YOU THINK OF THAT WONDERFUL NIGHT WITH HER WHEN YOU REDISCOVERED THE REASON FOR LIVING...

YOU'RE A NICE GUY, LARRY. I LIKE YOU. C'MON. LET'S GET OUT OF THIS JOINT! I'VE GOT A CAR OUTSIDE...

SURE, BABY...

...THAT WONDERFUL NIGHT, DRIVING OUT OF THE CITY... THE ROAD, STRETCHING INTO THE DARKNESS...

LET'S NOT ASK ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT EACH OTHER, LARRY. NO LAST NAMES. NO PHONE NUMBERS. LET'S JUST ENJOY TONIGHT... WITH NO YESTERDAY AND NO TOMORROW...

THANKS, ANNIE! I'M GLAD YOU UNDERSTAND!

...THE EXCITEMENT THAT RIPPLED THROUGH YOUR BODY AND MADE YOUR HEART BEAT FASTER AND YOUR BLOOD RUN HOT AS SHE SWUNG HER CAR INTO THE PARKING LOT...

YOU THINK OF THAT WONDERFUL NIGHT WITH ANNIE... AND THE MORNING AFTER, WAKING AND FINDING THE CABIN EMPTY... ANNIE GONE. AND THE NOTE...

LARRY, DARLING,

MEET ME NEXT TUESDAY. SAME PLACE. SAME TIME.

I LOVE YOU, ANNIE...

SO YOU STAND BEFORE PHIL MASON, BEGGING FOR A JOB... BEGGING FOR A CHANCE AT RESPECTABILITY ONCE AGAIN...

WELL, IT'S TRUE, PHIL! I DID MEET A GIRL. AND I'M IN LOVE WITH HER. I NEED A JOB, PHIL. I NEED DOUGH! I'M GOING TO SEE HER AGAIN AND I'M... I'M BROKE. I WANT TO GET SOME CLOTHES... A NICE GIFT FOR HER... A...

LOOK, LARRY! I'LL TELL YOU WHAT I'LL DO...

PHIL LOOKS UP AT YOU GRIMLY...

YOU GO OUT AND **SHOW ME YOU'RE STILL A GOOD REPORTER** AND I'LL PUT YOU ON THE PAYROLL. YOU COME IN WITH A **SCOOP... A FRONT-PAGE HEADLINE...** AND YOU'RE IN! **FAIR ENOUGH?**

THANKS, PHIL!
THANKS A LOT!
ER...

PHIL HOLDS UP HIS HAND...

NOTHIN' DOIN', LARRY! **NO TOUCH!**
NOT A **DIME** TILL YOU **PRODUCE**.
NOW, **SCRAM**... I'M **BUSY!**

SURE, PHIL! SURE!

YOU CLOSE THE DOOR TO THE MANAGING EDITORS OFFICE AND YOU STRIDE THROUGH THE CITY ROOM...

WELL...IF IT AIN'T **LARRY GRIEG...** HELLO, STAN!
ONE-TIME **AGE REPORTER...** **CUT THE CRACKS.**
LEADING **CANDIDATE FOR** I'VE QUIT DRINKIN'.
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS! ...AND I'M COMIN'
BACK TO WORK!

YOU... COMIN' BACK
HERE? DON'T
MAKE ME LAUGH!

PHIL'S GOING TO GIVE ME
ANOTHER CHANCE, STAN. IF I
COME IN WITH A **YARN**, HE'LL
PUT ME ON. SO **ONE SIDE!**
LET ME PASS! I'M IN A
HURRY!

STAN LAUGHS AFTER YOU, HIS
VOICE RISING ABOVE THE UPROAR...

WHY DON'T YOU DO A **SPREAD**
ON HOW A GUY SLIDES FROM THE
TOP TO THE BOTTOM ON A
BOTTLE OF BOOZE, LARRY...

HIS VOICE... HIGH-PITCHED... IRRITATING...
MAKING YOU CLENCH YOUR
FISTS...

THE **ONLY** THING YOU'LL COME
IN WITH WILL BE **ONE WHOPPER**
OF A **HANGOVER...**

YOU SLAM THE DOOR TO THE CITY
ROOM AND YOU STAND IN THE
SILENCE OF THE HALL... AND YOU
GRIT YOUR TEETH...

NO! NO!
I CAN DO IT!
I CAN...

AND SUDDENLY YOU THINK OF ANNIE... BEAUTIFUL, BEAUTIFUL ANNIE. AND YOU *KNOW* YOU CAN DO IT. YOU STRAIGHTEN UP... AND YOU SWING DOWN THE HALL AND OUT INTO THE STREET...



THE MORNING SUN IS WARM UPON YOUR FACE. THE TRAFFIC NOISES SING AROUND YOU. YOU BEGIN TO WALK...



THIS IS YOUR CHANCE, LARRY. TODAY. TOMORROW IS TUESDAY. TOMORROW NIGHT YOU MEET ANNIE AGAIN. YOU'VE GOT TO DO IT... *TODAY*...



BY AFTERNOON, PANIC HAS TAKEN HOLD OF YOU. YOU'VE WALKED ALL DAY AND YOU HAVEN'T COME ACROSS ANYTHING. *NOT ONE LEAD!* BY EVENING, YOUR STOMACH IS A TIGHT NERVOUS KNOT...

I... I NEED A DRINK. I...



NO, LARRY. NO! THAT'S NOT THE ANSWER. KEEP WALKING! YOU'LL FIND SOMETHING. YOU'LL GET THAT STORY. KEEP WALKING...

A CUP OF COFFEE. THAT'S WHAT I NEED!



YOU SWING INTO THE ALL-NIGHT DINER AND SLIDE ONTO A STOOL. THE PLACE IS EMPTY. THERE'S NO ONE BEHIND THE COUNTER. YOU'RE READY TO CALL FOR SERVICE WHEN YOU HEAR THE ANGRY VOICES COMING FROM THE BACK...

I SAID YOU'RE NOT GOING ANYWHERE, YOU... YOU...

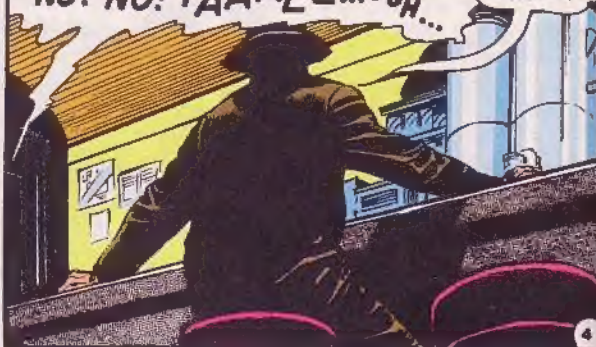
I'LL DO AS I PLEASE, YOU FAT SLOB!



YOU LISTEN AS THE MAN AND WOMAN IN THE APARTMENT BEHIND THE DINER ARGUE. AND THEN YOU HEAR THE QUICK MOVEMENTS... THE FURNITURE OVERTURN... SOMETHING CRASH... AND THE BLOOD-CURDLING SCREAM...

NO! NO! YAAAE...*OOH*...

WHAT THE...



YOU SWING OFF THE STOOL AND DASH AROUND THE COUNTER TO THE DOOR...

HEY! HEY!
IN THERE!



YOU TUG AT THE KNOB... POUND AT THE DOOR. BEYOND, A BODY SLUMPS TO THE FLOOR. FOOTSTEPS APPROACH. A KEY TURNS. THE DOOR SWINGS OPEN...

WHAT IN BLAZES
IS GOING ON?

I... I KILLED HER!
SHE... SHE DESERVED IT!



YOU PEEK INTO THE DINGY APARTMENT BEYOND THE DOOR... AT THE UPTURNED TABLE... THE SMASHED LAMP... THE WOMAN LYING SILENT AND STILL AMID THE RUBBLE...

GASP! MY...MY
STORY!

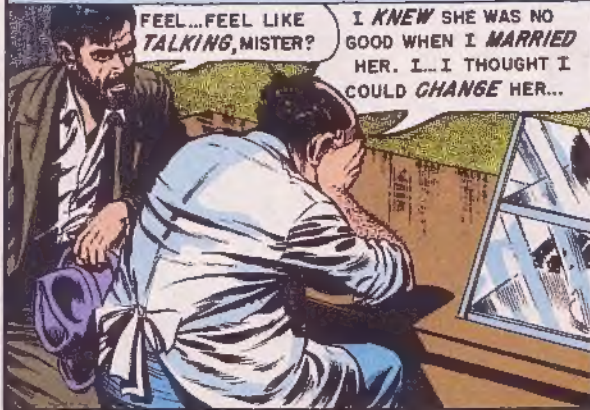
SHE WAS NO GOOD!... SOB...
SHE WAS NOTHING BUT A
TRAMP!... SOB...



YOU TURN TO THE HEAVY BALDING MAN IN THE GREASE-STAINED APRON WHO SITS NOW UPON ONE OF THE COUNTER-STOOLS WITH HIS HEAD IN HIS HANDS, CRYING LIKE A BABY...

FEEL... FEEL LIKE
TALKING, MISTER?

I KNEW SHE WAS NO
GOOD WHEN I MARRIED
HER. I... I THOUGHT I
COULD CHANGE HER...



YOU SNATCH A PAPER NAPKIN AND A PENCIL FROM THE SHELF BEHIND THE COUNTER. YOU SCRIBBLE DOWN NOTES AS THE MURDERER SOBS OUT HIS WORDS...

I WORKED LIKE A DOG FOR HER.
I TRIED TO GIVE HER EVERYTHING.
BUT IT WASN'T ENOUGH. NEVER
ENOUGH...

I SEE...



SHE CAME TO WORK FOR ME... AS A WAITRESS... HERE...
TWO YEARS AGO. SHE USED TO FLIRT WITH EVERY
CRUMB THAT CAME IN. SHE WENT OUT WITH THEM...
DANCING... DRINKING... YOU KNOW. SHE WAS JUST
BAD. BUT... SOB... I... I FELL IN LOVE WITH HER...



'I ASKED HER TO MARRY ME. I WANTED TO SAVE HER FROM HERSELF. I WANTED TO GIVE HER A NEW LIFE...'

MARRY YOU, MIKE? DON'T BE RIDICULOUS!

YOU WON'T HAVE TO WORK. YOU CAN TAKE IT EASY. WE'LL FIX UP THE PLACE BACK THERE...

'I PROMISED HER THE WORLD...'

YOU CAN BUY NEW FURNITURE... NEW CLOTHES. WE...WE COULD HAVE...KIDS!

NOT ME, MIKE! I WANT TO LIVE. I'M YOUNG. I DON'T WANT TO BE TIED DOWN WITH KIDS...

ALL RIGHT, HONEY! NO KIDS THEN. WHATEVER YOU SAY! I LOVE YOU. MARRY ME!

I'LL THINK ABOUT IT, MIKE! I'LL... THINK ABOUT IT!



'I KEPT AFTER HER. I COULDN'T HELP MYSELF. I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN BETTER. AND FINALLY...'

OKAY, MIKE. I'LL MARRY YOU!

YOU WON'T REGRET IT, HONEY. YOU'LL SEE...



'NO. SHE DIDN'T REGRET IT. NOT HER. I WAS HER MEAL-TICKET...HER BANKROLL. AND SHE TOOK ADVANTAGE OF IT...'

WHAT'S THAT, BABY?

CLOTHES, MIKE. A WHOLE NEW WARDROBE. YOU SAID I COULD BUY CLOTHES...



'BUT THEN SHE STARTED GOING OUT AT NIGHT. TWICE... THREE TIMES A WEEK. SHE WAS UP TO HER OLD TRICKS AGAIN...'

PLEASE, HONEY. STAY HOME TONIGHT. DON'T GO OUT AGAIN. STAY HOME WITH ME...

IN THIS RAT TRAP? NOT ME, BUSTER. I WANT TO HAVE SOME FUN...



'SHE WAS NO GOOD. SHE SPENT ALL MY MONEY ON CLOTHES, A CAR, GOOD TIMES. SHE RAN AROUND WITH PLENTY OF MEN...'

IT'S FOUR O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING. WHERE WERE YOU ALL NIGHT?

NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS...



FINALLY I COULDN'T STAND IT ANY LONGER. I HAD HER FOLLOWED. THE PRIVATE COP I HIRED GAVE ME A REPORT...

SHE PICKED UP SOME GUY AT A DANCE PALACE AND... WELL, YOU WERE RIGHT ABOUT HER...

SOB...

SOB...

SO TONIGHT, WHEN SHE SAID SHE WAS GOING OUT AGAIN, I TRIED TO STOP HER...

YOU'RE NOT GOING ANYWHERE, YOU... YOU...

I'LL DO AS I PLEASE, YOU FAT SLOB...

I...I COULDN'T HELP IT. I GRABBED HER BY THE THROAT...AND SQUEEZED...

...GGG HHHH...

YOU'RE NOT GOING ANYWHERE... ANYMORE...



SO NOW YOU'VE GOT YOUR STORY, LARRY GRIEG... RIGHT FROM THE MURDERER'S MOUTH. IT'S FRONT-PAGE MATERIAL, LARRY. IT MEANS A JOB, IT MEANS...

YOU GO INTO THE SHABBY BACK APARTMENT AND CLOSE THE DOOR. YOU STEP OVER THE STILL BODY OF THE MURDERED WOMAN AND YOU PICK UP THE PHONE...

GOT A PHONE, MISTER?

IN THERE! IN THE BACK...

HELLO? CITY DESK? GIVE ME PHIL MASON! HELLO, MASON? I'VE GOT MY SCOOP! SWITCH ON REWRITE AND LISTEN TO THIS...



YOU DICTATE IT... THE WHOLE THING WITH ALL THE GORY DETAILS. IT'S JUST LIKE OLD TIMES AGAIN, LARRY. JUST LIKE OLD TIMES...

...AND NOW, I'M GOING TO PUT IN A CALL FOR THE COPS. THAT'S IT! GOT IT?

GOT IT, LARRY, YOU OLD SON-OF-A-GUN! WHAT A GREAT YARN! COME ON IN AND PICK UP YOUR FIRST WEEK'S PAY...

YOU PUT DOWN THE PHONE AND YOU SMILE. YOU KNOW NOW THAT YOU'LL NEVER HIT THE BOTTLE AGAIN. YOU'VE FOUND YOURSELF ONCE MORE, LARRY! YOU'RE A NEW MAN. AND YOU'VE GOT A WHOLE NEW LIFE AHEAD OF YOU... WITH ANNIE...

MOANNNNNN...

GAASP!



YOU SPIN AROUND. THE FIGURE ON THE FLOOR! IT'S MOVING!...

MY GOD! SHE'S NOT DEAD!

COUGH...COUGH...



YOUR STORY, LARRY. IT'S GOING OUT THE WINDOW! SHE'S NOT DEAD! HE DIDN'T KILL HER! DO SOMETHING, LARRY. DO SOMETHING!

NO! I WON'T LET YOU!
NO! YOU'RE NOT GOING TO RUIN EVERYTHING FOR ME! NO...

G-G- GHHH!



SQUEEZE HARD, LARRY! MAKE SURE THIS TIME, LARRY. THE DOOR IS CLOSED. MIKE WILL NEVER KNOW! MAKE SURE SHE DIES THIS TIME. SQUEEZE...TIGHTER...TIGHTER...



ALL RIGHT, LARRY. THAT'S ENOUGH. SHE'S FINISHED. GET UP. DUST YOURSELF OFF. GO AHEAD...CALL THE COPS...

HELLO? POLICE? I WANT TO REPORT A MURDER...



NOW GO BACK, LARRY. GO BACK TO THE BODY. LOOK AT HER FACE! LOOK AT IT...

MY GOD!

IT... IT'S ANNIE!



ANNIE STARES UP AT YOU WITH BLIND BULGING EYES. YOU BACK AWAY...GASPING. YOUR STOMACH TIGHTENS...KNOTS. YOUR MOUTH IS SUDDENLY DRY...

I...CHOKE...I... I NEED A DRINK!



YES, LARRY! YOU NEED A DRINK. YOU NEED TEN... TWELVE...A HUNDRED DRINKS. BUT NO MATTER HOW MUCH YOU DRINK, LARRY, YOU'LL NEVER ERASE ANNIE'S BULGING EYES FROM YOUR MIND! YOU'LL ALWAYS SEE HER...EVEN INTO INSSENSIBILITY... EVEN TO... THE END.

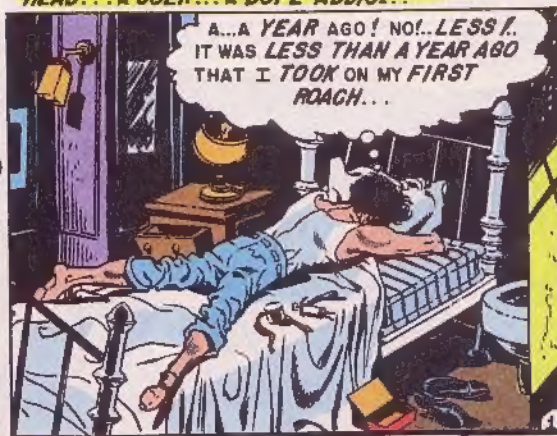
THE MONKEY

I SPRAWL FACE DOWNWARD ON THE SWEAT-SOAKED IRON BED OF A DISMAL CHEAP HOTEL ROOM, WITH MY GUTS LONG EMPTIED AND THE SINK STAINED BILIOUS FROM MY HEAVINGS, AND I TREMBLE AND SHIVER, STARTING AT EVERY SOUND THAT ECHOES OUTSIDE MY DOOR. MY FIT LIES OPEN BESIDE ME, THE INSTRUMENTS OF MY RELIEF SPILLED OUT UPON THE DIRTY BED SHEETS... THE SPIKE, THE HOSE, THE BLACKENED SPOON, THE CAN OF STERNO, AND I WAIT. I WAIT WITH MY FIT FOR THE WELCOME FOOTSTEPS ON THE STAIRS... FOR THE STACCATO KNOCKING UPON THE DOOR... FOR THE FAMILIAR FIGURE TO SAUNTER THROUGH IT WITH HIS HAND EXTENDED, TAKING MY MONEY AND SLIPPING ME MY PRECIOUS JOLT OF 'H'. I'VE WAITED. BUT MY PUSHER HAS NOT COME...



I'VE WAITED THROUGH THE HOURS WHILE THE PERSPIRATION POURED FROM MY PORES AND MY STOMACH TIED ITSELF INTO KNOTS AND MY MUSCLES FELT LIKE RED-HOT RODS AND THE MONKEY ON MY BACK BEGAN TO SCRATCH AND TEAR AND SCREAM UNTIL I HAD TO HOLD MY TREMBLING HANDS TIGHT OVER MY MOUTH TO SHUT THAT MADDENING MONKEY UP...

AND AS I LIE HERE WITH MY BODY RACKED IN PAIN AND MY THROAT DRY AND BURNING AND MY TONGUE FUZZY IN MY MOUTH, I THINK OF HOW I FIRST BECAME A HEAD... A USER... A DOPE ADDICT...



'ROACH' IS JIVE-T... JOINT'...
A REEFER...A MARIJUANA
CIGARETTE. MOST 'HEADS'
START WITH 'T' AND GRADUATE
TO 'H' OR 'M'...HEROIN OR
MORPHINE. THAT'S WHAT HAP-
PENED TO ME. I WAS GOING TO
CENTRAL HIGH BACK THEN...

POT GRASS
BUTTS, YOU
SQUARE. DON'T
YOU POP THIS
STUFF YET?

MARI-
JUANA!?

COOL IT, YOU JERK.
YOU WANT TO GET
ME TWISTED?
SOME HARC MAY BE
PINNING US. C'MON.
HOP IN.

NO, THANKS,
SID. I'D
RATHER
NOT...

HEY, EDDIE!
C'MON ALONG.
ME AND SOME OF
THE CLAN ARE
GOING TO BLAST
A FEW OF THESE.

WHAT ARE
THEY, SID?

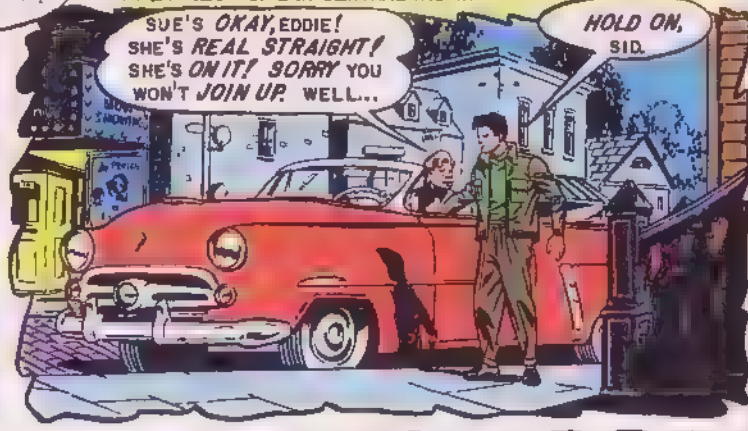
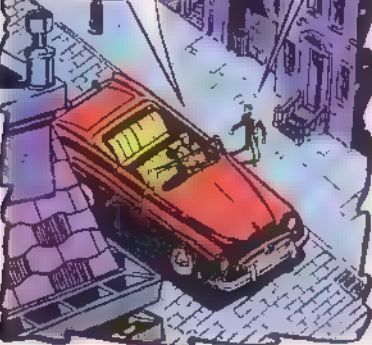
AW, C'MON, EDDIE.
WE'RE GONNA HAVE
A WHIS...A BALL.
SUE'LL BE THERE.
I KNOW YOU LIKE
SUE.

SUE!?! SUE
MINNER? SHE...
SHE SMOKES 'T'?

I COULDN'T BELIEVE IT. SUE MINNER SMOKING MARI-
JUANA. I WAS CRAZY ABOUT SUE. I THOUGHT SHE WAS THE
PRETTIEST GIRL IN CENTRAL HIGH...

SUE'S OKAY, EDDIE!
SHE'S REAL STRAIGHT!
SHE'S ON IT! SORRY YOU
WON'T JOIN UP. WELL...

HOLD ON,
SID.



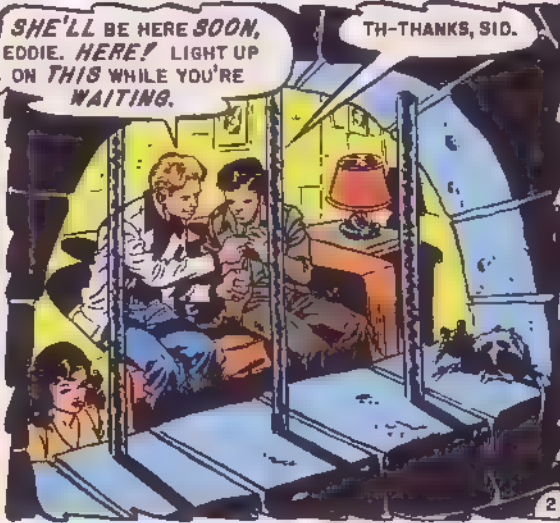
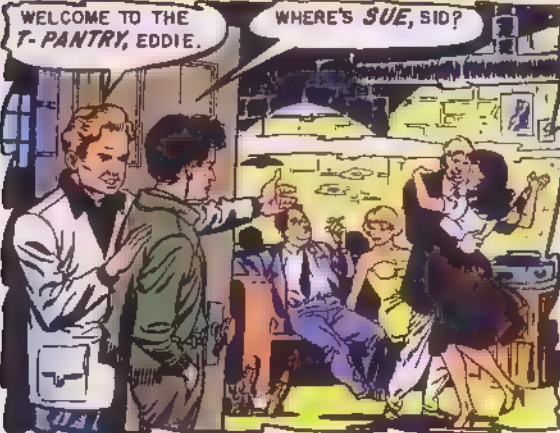
I FIGURED IT WOULD BE A GOOD WAY TO GET FRIENDLY
WITH SUE, SO I WENT ALONG WITH SID. HE TOOK ME
TO A DINGY CELLAR CLUB HOUSE NEAR THE SCHOOL...

WELCOME TO THE
T-PANTRY, EDDIE.

WHERE'S SUE, SID?

SHE'LL BE HERE SOON,
EDDIE. HERE! LIGHT UP
ON THIS WHILE YOU'RE
WAITING.

TH-THANKS, SID.



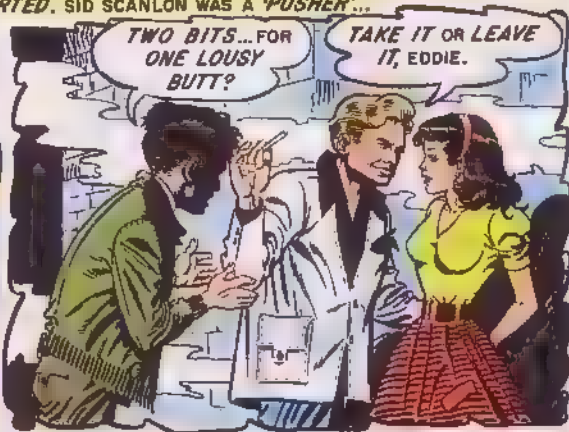
THAT 'ROACH' I BLASTED WHILE WAITING FOR SUE MINNER WAS MY **FIRST** MARIJUANA CIGARETTE. SID SCANLON, WHO'D GIVEN IT TO ME, WATCHED TILL I'D FINISHED IT. SUE NEVER CAME, BUT BY THAT TIME I DIDN'T CARE. I WAS 'HI'...

I NEVER REALIZED TILL IT WAS MUCH TOO LATE THAT SID HAD **LIED** TO ME ABOUT SUE... THAT SHE WAS **NEVER** COMING... AND THAT HE'D ONLY **GIVEN** ME THE 'JOINT' TO GET ME **STARTED**. SID SCANLON WAS A 'PUSHER'...



GIMME ANOTHER ONE, SID. I'M FLYIN'.

THESE THINGS COST DOUGH, EDDIE. LET YOU HAVE ONE FOR TWO BITS.



TWO BITS... FOR ONE LOUSY BUTT?

TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT, EDDIE.

I TOOK IT. I WAS 'HOOKED'. I REACHED INTO MY POCKET AND FORKED OVER WHAT WAS TO BE MY **FIRST** IN A LONG SERIES OF **PAYMENTS** FOR 'THE STUFF'...

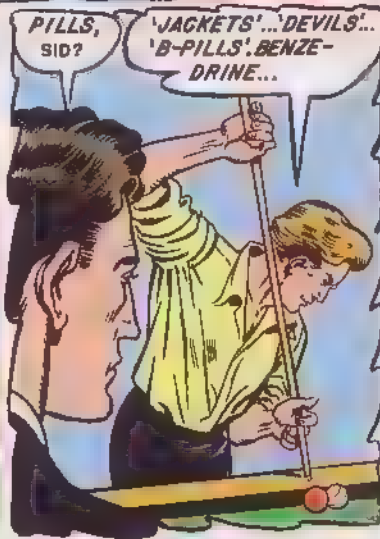
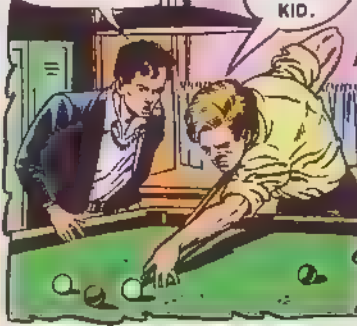
SID NEVER HAD TO LOOK FOR ME AFTER THAT. I LOOKED FOR HIM. AND IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE I WAS BEGGING HIM FOR...

I'LL... TAKE IT, SID. HERE Y'ARE.

THANKS, EDDIE. I'LL BE SEEING YOU. S'LONG.

...SOMETHIN' **STRONGER**, SID. I DON'T GET MUCH OF A **RISE** OUT OF 'T' ANYMORE.

I CAN GET YOU SOME 'PILLS', KID.



PILLS, SID?

'JACKETS'... 'DEVILS'... 'B-PILLS'. BENZEDRINE...

I WAS PROMOTED. NOW I WAS A 'BENNY-HEAD'... A **BARBITUATE-HEAD**... A **BENZEDRINE** ADDICT...

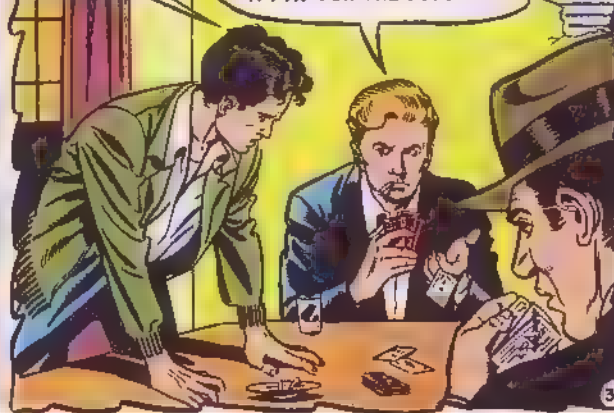
AND THEN, IT WAS ONLY NATURAL THAT I GRADUATED TO...

RED OR YELLOW, KID?

IT DOESN'T MATTER, SID... EITHER ONE. I NEED IT BAD. GIMME...

'H', SID. I NEED 'H'.

OKAY, EDDIE. BUT, IT'LL COST YOU! TWO BUCKS A JOLT AND A FIN FOR THE FIT.



IT HAD TAKEN ME LESS THAN **THREE MONTHS** TO MOVE FROM BLASTING 'JIVE-T' TO POPPING 'H'. SID PROVIDED ME WITH 'THE FIT'... A 'SPIKE' OR 'HYPO', A LENGTH OF **RUBBER HOSE** TO DISTEND THE VEIN, A **SPOON** TO HEAT THE 'H' IN, AND A CAN OF STERNO. I WAS **ON IT**...

I NEED A **FIX**, SID. HERE'S THE TWO BUCKS.

SORRY, EDDIE. MY OLD SUPPLIER GOT **NABBED** BY THE **HEATS**. A JOLT WILL COST YOU **TEN**, NOW.

THE ALLOWANCE MY MOM AND DAD GAVE ME WASN'T ENOUGH TO KEEP MY NEEDS SATISFIED NOW. I NEEDED **MORE DOUGH**. I GOT A JOB AFTER SCHOOL...

S'MATTER, EDDIE?
YOU LOOK **SICK**!

IT'S **NOTHIN'**, MR CLEMENTS. I'M ALL RIGHT. ER...CAN YOU GIVE ME AN **ADVANCE** ON MY **PAY**, TODAY, MR. CLEMENTS?

TODAY'S ONLY **WEDNESDAY**, EDDIE! **ALREADY**, I'VE GIVEN YOU **HALF** YOUR **PAY**!

I **NEED** IT, MR CLEMENTS! **PLEASE**!

YOU LOOK **FUNNY**, EDDIE. YOUR EYES...

GET OFF MY BACK, MR. CLEMENTS! ARE YOU GOING TO **GIVE** ME THE **DOUGH** OR **AIN'T** YOU?

YOU **FINISH** THE **WEEK**...YOU **GET PAID**. **NO MORE ADVANCES**.

WHY, YOU **DIRTY LITTLE**. @#!'XX?!

I COULDN'T **HOLD** A JOB AFTER THAT. MOM AND DAD NEVER KNEW IT, BUT I STOPPED **GOING** TO SCHOOL. I USED TO GO **DOWNTOWN**, TO THE **DEPARTMENT STORES**...AND **SHOPLIFT**...

...AND THEN I'D **PAWN** THE STUFF I'D **SWIPED**...

WHERE'D YOU **GET** IT?

DON'T ASK QUESTIONS. JUST GIMME WHAT IT'S **WORTH** TO YOU, AND **MAKE** IT **SNAPPY**.

I'D TAKE THE DOUGH I'D GOTTEN FROM THE STUFF I'D SWIPED, AND I'D TRACK DOWN SID...

WHAT'S HAPPENING, SID?

I'M HOLDING! WANT TO SCORE?

YEAH! TWENTY-BUCKS WORTH!

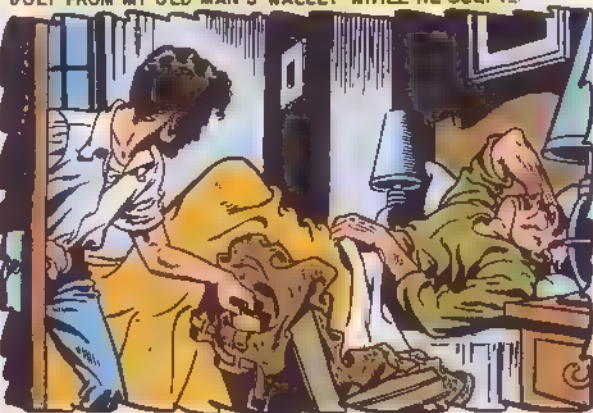
THAT'S ONE FIX!

ONE!? WHY, YOU...

SORRY, EDDIE. THAT'S THE PRICE! TAKE IT OR TRY A COLD TURKEY!

I TRIED A 'COLD TURKEY'...A WITHDRAWAL... ONCE AND ONLY ONCE. I WAS SHORT OF CASH. ALL NIGHT LONG I PACED THE FLOOR OF MY PAD AS THE TREMBLES BEGAN AND THE NAUSEA SWEEPED OVER ME AND I COMMUTED TO THE BATHROOM AND VOMITED MY GUTS OUT AND THE DIARRHEA POURED FROM ME AND MY NERVE-ENDS BURNED AND THE MONKEY ON MY BACK BEGAN TO SCRATCH AND CLAW AND TEAR UNTIL...

I'LL NEVER GO THROUGH THAT AGAIN. NEVER. I MADE UP MY MIND THAT NIGHT THAT I'D ALWAYS HAVE ENOUGH DOUGH FOR MY FIXES. I KNEW I COULD NEVER GO THROUGH A COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL. I SWIPED THE MONEY FOR A JOLT FROM MY OLD MAN'S WALLET WHILE HE SLEPT.



THE NEXT MORNING, WHEN I FINALLY SCORED WITH SID, I BEGGED HIM...

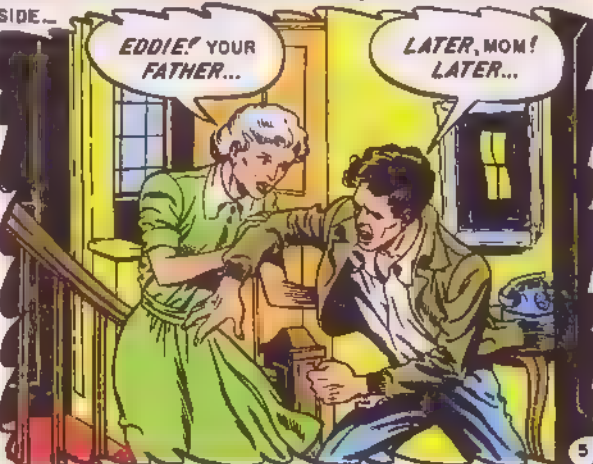
LET ME PUSH THE STUFF FOR YOU, SID. PAY ME OFF IN FIXES...A PERCENTAGE.

NOW YOU'RE TALKING, EDDIE. I'LL SPEAK TO SOME PEOPLE.

I RUSHED HOME, HOLDING, AND TORE UPSTAIRS TO MY PAD. MOM TRIED TO CORNER ME ON THE WAY, BUT I BRUSHED HER ASIDE...

EDDIE? YOUR FATHER...

LATER, MOM! LATER...



I SLAMMED INTO MY ROOM AND LOCKED THE DOOR AND PULLED OPEN MY DRAWER WHERE I KEPT MY FIT...

CRIPES, WHERE IS IT? I HAD IT HERE! I...



I LOOKED AROUND. DAD SAT ON THE BED BEHIND ME, STARING AT ME, HIS EYES BURNING... HIS MOUTH SET IN A TIGHT GRIM LINE...

THIS WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR, EDDIE?

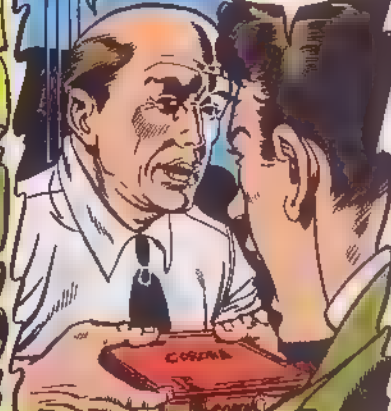
POP!



HE HELD THE FIT IN HIS HAND. HIS EYES FILLED WITH TEARS...

MY SON... TAKING DOPE!

GIVE IT TO ME, POP! GIVE ME THAT FIT.

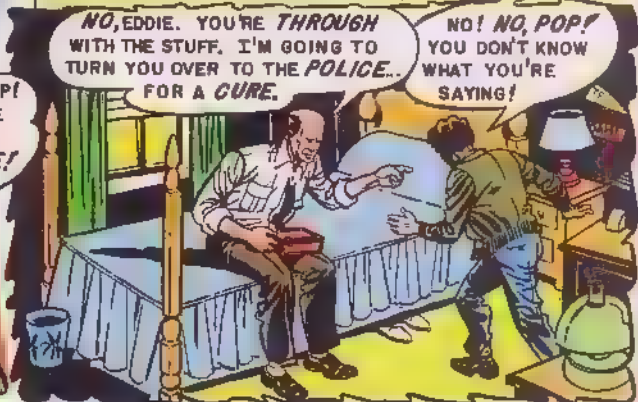


HE STARTED TO LECTURE ME. HIS MOUTH KEPT OPENING AND CLOSING AND WORDS POURED OUT, BUT I DIDN'T HEAR THEM. I KEPT LOOKING AT THE FIT WHILE MY THROAT GREW DRIER AND DRIER AND MY STOMACH STARTED TO GROWL AND HEAVE AND THE MONKEY CLIMBED UP THERE AGAIN...

...AND THE PAIN BEGAN. THE MONKEY STARTED SCRATCHING AND CLAWING AND I STARTED GETTING SICK AND DIZZY AND THE TREMBLES CAME OVER ME...

NO, EDDIE. YOU'RE THROUGH WITH THE STUFF. I'M GOING TO TURN YOU OVER TO THE POLICE... FOR A CURE.

NO! NO, POP! YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE SAYING!



WHAT DID WE EVER DO? WE GAVE YOU EVERYTHING. WE TRIED! WE SACRIFICED! WHY, EDDIE? WHY?

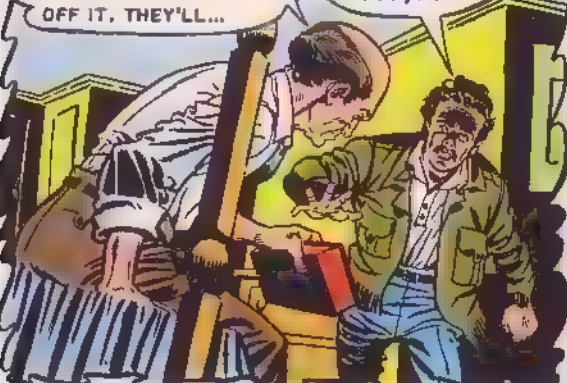
CAN IT, POP! GIMME THE FIT, FOR GOD'S SAKE!



POP STARTED TO GET UP, I FELT ALL WILD AND CRAZY AND DESPERATE INSIDE, AND THAT MAD-DENING MONKEY KEPT SCREAMING AND CLAWING...

IT'S FOR YOUR OWN GOOD, EDDIE. THEY'LL GET YOU OFF IT. THEY'LL...

GIMME THAT FIT, POP!



SUDDENLY I SAW MYSELF GOING THROUGH A WITHDRAWAL AGAIN AND EVERYTHING WENT WHITE-HOT BEFORE MY EYES. I SNATCHED UP AN END-TABLE LAMP AND BROUGHT IT DOWN ON POP'S HEAD...



POP WENT SPRAWLING AND I GRABBED THE FIT AND DASHED OUT OF THE BED-ROOM. MOM SCREAMED AFTER ME...

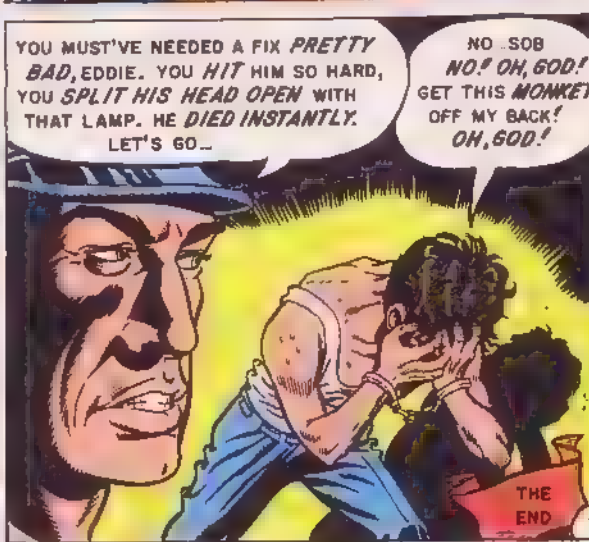
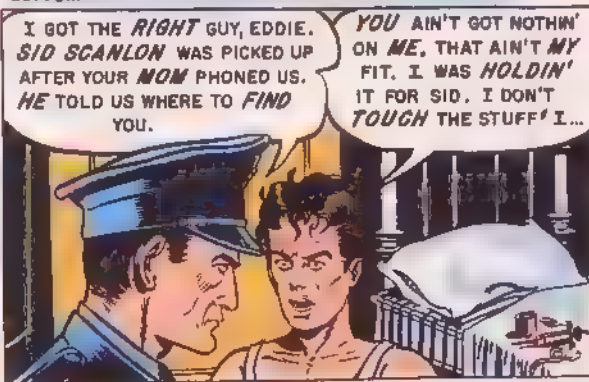
THAT WAS YESTERDAY. NOW, I LIE SPRAWLED ON THE SWEAT-SOAKED BED OF A DISMAL CHEAP HOTEL ROOM WITH MY GUTS LONG EMPTIED, TREMBLING AND SHIVERING, WAITING FOR SID...

THE SINK IN MY ROOM IS STAINED BILIOUS WITH MY HEAVINGS AND MY FIT LIES OPEN BESIDE ME AND I START AT EVERY SOUND OUTSIDE MY DOOR. AND THEN IT COMES. THE HEAVY KNOCK...



I LEAP FROM MY BED, DRIPPING WITH PERSPIRATION, AND SWING WIDE THE DOOR. THE FUZZ STANDS THERE IN HIS BLUE COAT WITH THE BRASS BUTTONS AND THE GLEAMING TIN SHIELD...

THE NARC PUSHES PAST ME, GRIMACES DOWN AT THE SPILLED FIT LYING ON THE IRON BED AND UNHOOKS HIS CUFFS...





LAST LAUGH!

When the plane reached 70,000 feet, the warning buzzer sounded. Major Clagg jumped up, his arms and legs tingling with nervousness. With scrupulous care he pulled the high-altitude oxygen mask over his face, strapped the specially devised oxygen tank to his chest-harness. His voice raised in a parody of a tune which he always sang before launching himself on one of these treacherous missions. "How High I Am!" he warbled, pushing his feet into the bulky pressurized boots. Another buzzer sounded and Major Clagg felt a slight pain at the base of his skull. It was a normal symptom... he was aware of it each time he parachuted.

At 72,000 feet he clambered into his pressurized trousers and jacket, barely able to move because of the stiffness of the material encasing his body. As he zipped up the jump suit, a chuckle sounded in his chest and bubbled out his mouth. He remembered one of his first jumps, from a height of 45,000 feet. He certainly got a guffaw *that* time, by releasing a fistfull of pingpong balls which showered down upon the tense audience of military men far below. It was *that* exploit which gave him the nickname "Chuckles"... a name admirably suited to the most violent practical-joker in the entire parachute corps. Each leap after that, the spectators had been alerted to some hysterical peccadillo of the Major's. He always got a laugh in his leaps, Clagg assured himself with a smirk.

The red bulb flashed: 75,000 feet. The Major pulled the pressurized gloves over his

hands, after making certain that the thermostat on his heated inner vest and underdrawers was working perfectly. He moved toward the jump door, probing at the anti-blackout hose to assure himself that it was firmly attached to the intake socket in his plexiglass helmet. Then, with a sly smile, he opened his jump kit and pulled out a huge cloth doll almost five feet tall. This would be his crowning gag, Clagg thought to himself with glee... on his greatest jump he would release the doll and let it plummet downwards toward the nervous spectators. From a height of 77,500 feet the big floppy doll would drop with incredible speed... and the men gathered below would think it was Clagg, himself! What a laugh he'd get with *this* stunt! The biggest practical joke of his career!

The jump door opened and Clagg tensed himself. Then, with a chuckle that sounded weird inside his helmet, he released the doll and watched it drop down. A moment later, with a chuckle, Major Clagg stepped out into open air.

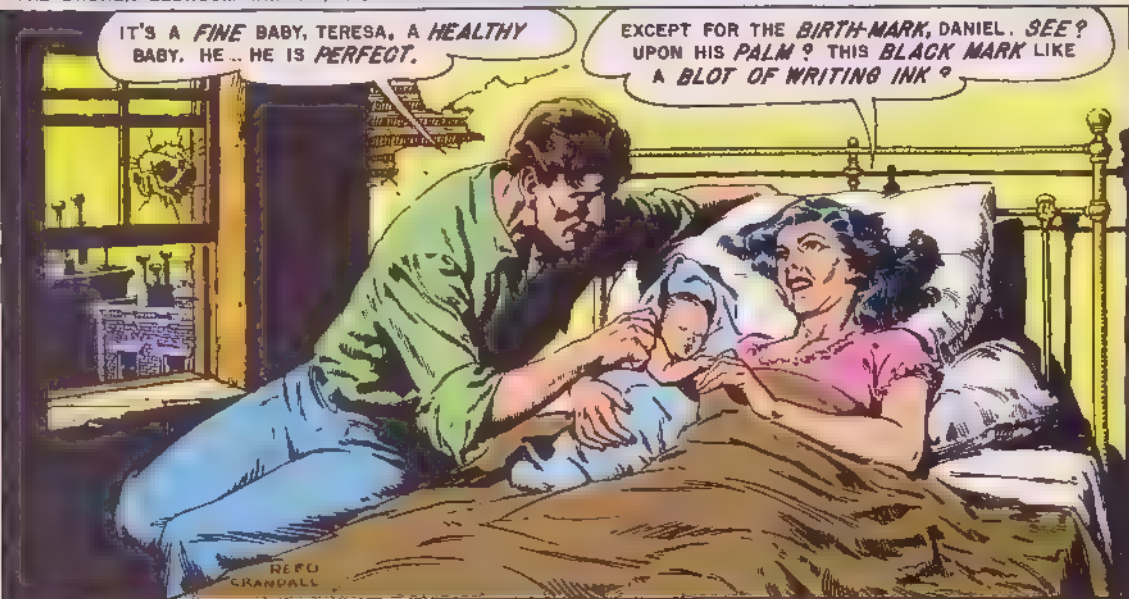
A hissing sound brought him back to consciousness; the intake valve had pulled him out of his blackout. And the rest of the equipment was working perfectly, he realized, as he turned topsy-turvy in the thin, freezing air... the result of meticulous care.

He counted to ten, then reached for the ripcord. His finger tightened on the mechanism and he braced himself for the inevitable churning shock. Then he pulled hard. Nothing happened, except for a high, nervous giggle inside the Major's big plexiglass helmet! In all his frantic haste to perpetuate his big doll gag, "Chuckles" was the victim of a slight oversight: *this* hilarious joke was on HIM!

For Major Clagg had left his parachute in the plane!

The KIDNAPPER

DANIEL SAT NERVOUSLY UPON THE BED IN THEIR SQUALID TENEMENT APARTMENT BESIDE HIS PALE SMILING WIFE, TERESA, FINGERING THE SOFT PINK FLESH OF THIS MIRACLE OF LIFE THAT WAS THEIR NEWBORN SON. HE GAZED IN AWE UPON THE WRINKLED TEAR-STAINED FACE AND THE TINY PUDGY HANDS WITH THEIR TEN SHAPELESS FINGERS, AND HE NODDED AND WEPT A LITTLE IN THANKFULNESS AND RELIEF. THE WAITING WAS FINALLY OVER. ALL THE FEARS AND APPREHENSIONS WERE ERASED. TERESA WAS WELL AND THE BABY WAS WELL, AND OUTSIDE, BEYOND THE BROKEN BEDROOM WINDOW, THE SUN WAS SHINING...



IT'S A *FINE* BABY, TERESA, A *HEALTHY* BABY. HE... HE IS *PERFECT*.

EXCEPT FOR THE *BIRTH-MARK*, DANIEL. *SEE?* UPON HIS *PALM*? THIS *BLACK MARK* LIKE A *BLOT OF WRITING INK*?

DANIEL CLOSED THE TINY FIST AND STROKED HIS WIFE'S HAIR THAT NOW LAY STRINGY UPON THE PILLOW, STILL DAMP WITH THE PERSPIRATION OF HER PAIN...

IT IS *NOTHING*, TERESA! A *BEAUTY MARK*! A SIGN OF *LUCK*! PERHAPS, SOMEDAY, OUR SON WILL BE *RICH*... *FAMOUS*, PERHAPS IT IS A MARK OF *FATE*.

OH, DANIEL, I AM *SO HAPPY*. HOW I *LONGED* FOR THIS DAY... *PRAYED* FOR IT AND NOW IT HAS *COME*.

TERESA LOOKED INTO DANIEL'S EYES AND HER PALID FACE GLOWED WITH THE STRANGE RADIANT BEAUTY OF MOTHERHOOD...

I HAVE GIVEN YOU A *SON*, MY DEAREST. AND IN TIME, THERE WILL BE *OTHERS*... A *DAUGHTER*...

PLEASE TERESA. LET'S NOT *TALK* ABOUT THAT NOW.



DANIEL TURNED AWAY SO THAT HIS WIFE WOULD NOT SEE HIS EYES FILLING WITH TEARS...



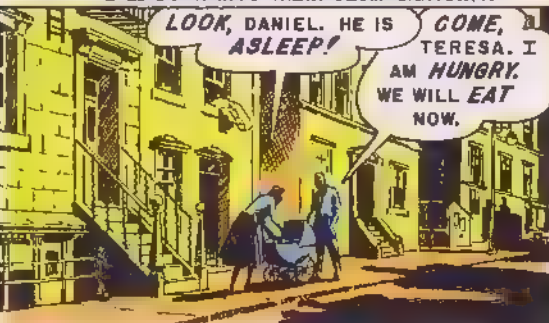
THE BEDROOM OF THE TENEMENT APARTMENT FELL SILENT. ONLY THE TRAFFIC NOISE BELOW... THE SCREECHING CHILDREN, THE CAR HORNS, THE MOURNFUL CALLS OF THE PEDDLERS... FILTERED UPWARD. THEN, THE NEW-BORN BABY BEGAN TO CRY...



DANIEL CLOSED THE DOOR TO THE BEDROOM AND LEANED BACK AGAINST IT, LISTENING TO THE BABY'S CRIES FADE, AND CONTENTED SUCKLING SOUNDS REPLACE THEM...



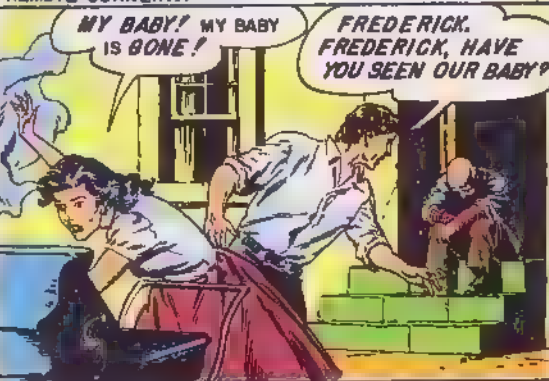
DANIEL'S SON WAS TWO MONTHS OLD WHEN IT HAPPENED. TERESA HAD WRAPPED HIM WARMLY AND PUT HIM OUT IN THE SECOND-HAND CARRIAGE THEY'D BOUGHT TO CATCH THE FEW SHORT HOURS OF SUNLIGHT THAT FILTERED DOWN INTO THEIR SLUM-CANYON...



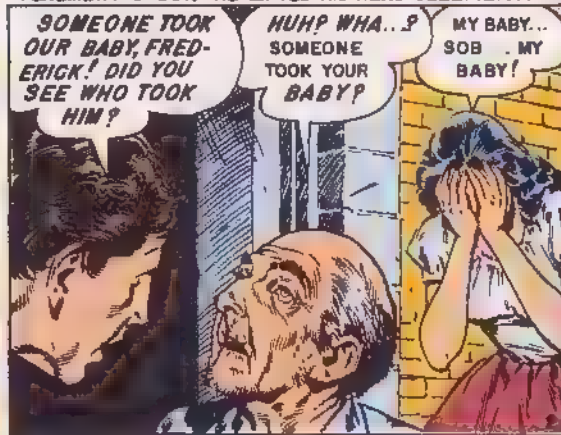
TERESA AND DANIEL HAD CLIMBED BACK UP THE LITTER-STREWN STAIRS TO THEIR MEAGER LUNCH WHILE THEIR BABY SLEPT SOUNDLY IN THE CARRIAGE OUTSIDE. BUT WHEN THE HAPPY PARENTS HAD RETURNED...



TERESA TORE AWAY THE HAND-ME-DOWN BLANKETS THAT KINDLY NEIGHBORS HAD GIVEN HER AND CLAWED ABOUT THE CARRIAGE, WIDE EYED... AS IF, PERCHANCE, HER SON HAD SHRUNK AND NOW LAY HIDDEN IN SOME REMOTE CORNER...



THE OLD MAN CALLED FREDERICK SAT DOZING UPON THE TENEMENT STOOP. HE LIFTED HIS HEAD SLEEPILY...



THE POLICE CAME, AND REPORTERS FROM THE PAPERS CAME, AND EVERYBODY ASKED EVERYBODY QUESTIONS. THE POLICE WROTE IN THEIR LITTLE BOOKS, AND THE REPORTERS WROTE IN THEIR LITTLE BOOKS, AND AFTER A WHILE THEY WENT AWAY AND DANIEL COMFORTED HIS GRIEVING WIFE...

DO NOT WORRY, TERESA. THEY WILL FIND OUR SON.

OH, DANIEL... SOB... DANIEL...



EVERY MORNING, DANIEL AND TERESA WOULD WALK TO THE POLICE STATION AND SIT ALL DAY UPON THE HARD WOODEN BENCHES AND WAIT FOR THE NEWS THAT THE POLICE HAD FOUND THEIR SON. BUT NO NEWS WOULD COME...

SORRY, FOLKS! NOTHING YET!

BUT WHO WOULD WANT TO KIDNAP OUR CHILD?

WE ARE POOR! WE COULD NOT PAY TO GET HIM BACK! WHO WOULD DO SUCH A THING?



AND EVERY NIGHT DANIEL AND TERESA WOULD LEAVE THE POLICE STATION AND WALK THEIR LONELY WAY BACK TO THEIR TENEMENT, AND TERESA WOULD CRY...

I WANT MY BABY. I WANT MY BABY. SOB...

PLEASE, TERESA, YOU WILL MAKE YOURSELF SICK. DO NOT CRY ANYMORE!



THE DAYS PASSED AND THE WEEKS PASSED AND STILL THE BABY WAS NOT FOUND. TERESA GREW SILENT, STARING OUT OF THE BROKEN WINDOW WITH CRIED-OUT EYES. DANIEL TRIED TO CHEER HER...

THE PEOPLE WHO TOOK HIM WILL REALIZE THAT THEY HAVE MADE A MISTAKE...

HE IS GONE FOR GOOD!



YOU WILL SEE, TERESA. THEY WILL COME, ONE DAY, AND PUT HIM BACK IN THE CARRIAGE, AND YOU WILL HAVE YOUR BABY AGAIN. YOU WILL SEE...

I WILL NEVER HAVE MY BABY AGAIN. HE IS GONE FOR GOOD...



THE LONG WEEKS DRAGGED INTO MONTHS AND TERESA GREW WORSE EACH DAY... SULLEN, SILENT, SITTING HOUR BY HOUR, STARING AT THE EMPTY CARRIAGE. NO NEWS CAME FROM THE POLICE, AND ALL HOPE OF EVER FINDING THEIR BABY SEEMED GONE.

COME, TERESA YOU MUST EAT SOMETHING!

I AM NOT HUNGRY!



AT NIGHT, LYING BESIDE HIS WIFE, WHO GREW THINNER AND PALER EACH DAY, DANIEL WOULD LISTEN TO HER UNEVEN BREATHING AND HER QUIET WHISPERING...

MY BABY. I WANT MY BABY. OH, GOD, GIVE ME BACK MY BABY.



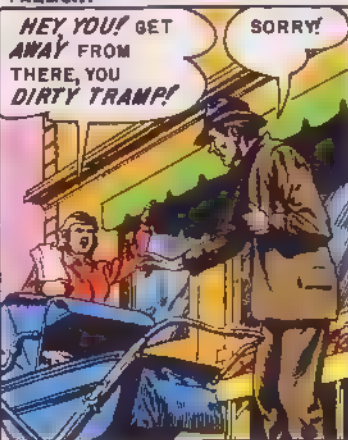
FINALLY, AFTER SIX LONG TORTUROUS MONTHS, DANIEL MADE UP HIS MIND. HE WOULD FIND THEIR BABY. HE WOULD SEARCH THE WHOLE CITY AND FIND HIM...



I'M GOING OUT, TERESA.

BRING ME MY BABY, DANIEL!

ALL DAY LONG, FROM DAWN TILL DUSK, DANIEL ROAMED THE CITY. SEARCHING, SEARCHING, PEERING INTO CARRIAGES, OPENING TINY INFANTS HANDS, STUDYING THEIR PALMS...



HEY YOU! GET AWAY FROM THERE, YOU DIRTY TRAMP!

SORRY!

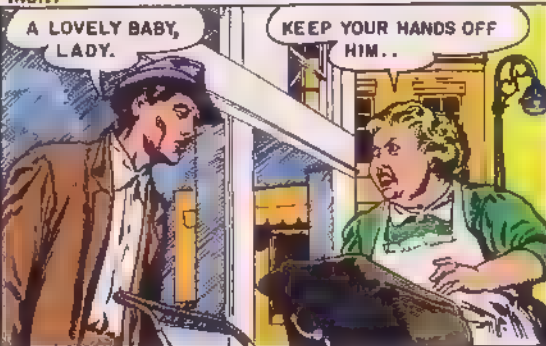
AND AT NIGHT, EXHAUSTED, HE WOULD RETURN TO HIS GRIEVING WIFE WHOSE EYES HAD GROWN GLASSY AND WHOSE LIPS HAD SEALED IN A TIGHT LINE AND WHO SAT AND STROKED THE EMPTY CARRIAGE HOUR AFTER HOUR...



DID YOU BRING ME MY BABY, DANIEL?

NO, TERESA, BUT I WILL. YOU WILL SEE!

A YEAR PASSED. DANIEL TOOK A MENIAL JOB AT NIGHT SO HE COULD SEARCH FOR HIS BABY DURING THE DAY. WEARILY HE TROD THE CITY STREETS... LOOKING, LOOKING...



A LOVELY BABY, LADY.

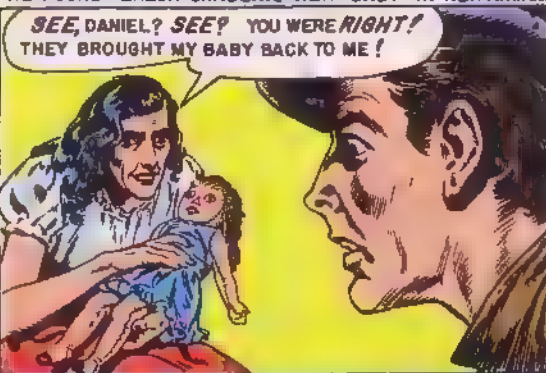
KEEP YOUR HANDS OFF HIM...

ONE DAY TERESA ROSE FROM HER WINDOW. SOMETHING HAD CAUGHT HER EYE. SHE FLEW DOWNSTAIRS AND OUT TO THE CURB... TO THE LINE OF RUSTY DENTED TRASH CANS...



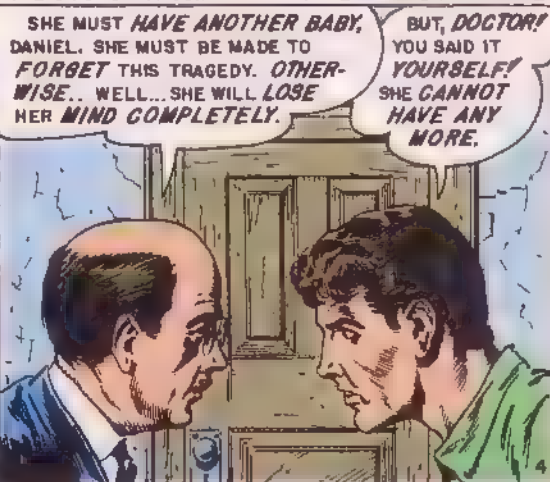
MY BABY!

IN THE EVENING, WHEN DANIEL RETURNED FROM ANOTHER OF HIS FRUITLESS TOURS OF THE VAST CITY, HE FOUND TERESA CRADLING HER 'BABY' IN HER ARMS.



SEE, DANIEL? SEE? YOU WERE RIGHT! THEY BROUGHT MY BABY BACK TO ME!

THE DOCTOR SHOOK HIS HEAD. HE TOOK DANIEL ASIDE.

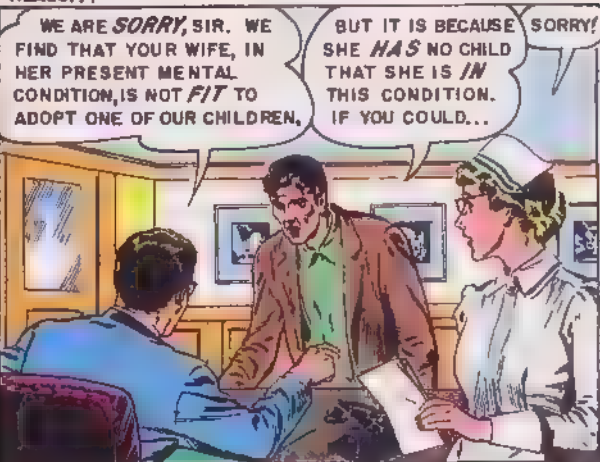


SHE MUST HAVE ANOTHER BABY, DANIEL. SHE MUST BE MADE TO FORGET THIS TRAGEDY. OTHERWISE... WELL... SHE WILL LOSE HER MIND COMPLETELY.

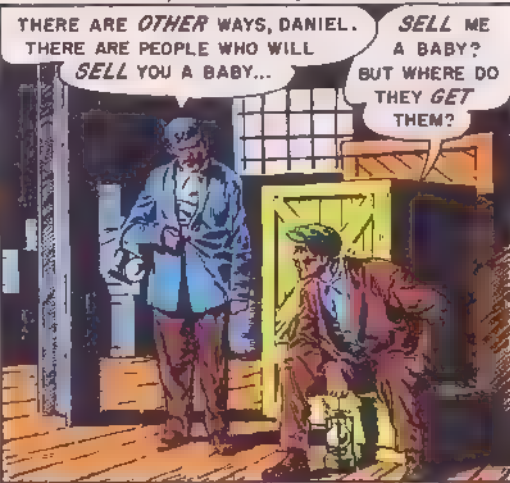
BUT, DOCTOR! YOU SAID IT YOURSELF! SHE CANNOT HAVE ANY MORE.

IT WAS A SOILED, TORN, DISCARDED RAG-DOLL... A CHILD'S CAST-OFF TOY THAT TERESA CRADLED LOVINGLY...

THE PEOPLE AT THE ADOPTION AGENCY SHOOK THEIR HEADS...



AND ONE NIGHT, AT HIS JOB, DANIEL LEARNED...



DANIEL'S SEARCHING CARRIED HIM FAR FROM THE TENEMENTS, TO TREE-LINED STREETS WITH QUIET FRESHLY-PAINTED HOUSES. ONE DAY, AT HIS WITS' END, HE SPIED A *GARRIAGE* SITTING BEFORE ONE OF THESE HOUSES...



THE LITTLE BOY INSIDE THE CARRIAGE COOED UP AT HIM SOFTLY. TEARS FILLED DANIEL'S EYES...



DANIEL LOOKED AT THE GRINNING BABY AND THOUGHT OF HIS BELOVED TERESA...AND SUDDENLY HE **SNATCHED THE CHILD FROM THE CARRIAGE...**



WHY NOT? THEY'D TAKEN *HIS* CHILD. HE'D TAKE *SOMEONE ELSE'S*. DANIEL CRADLED THE CHILD, RUNNING. A SHRILL SCREAM ECHOED UP THE TREE-LINED STREET BEHIND HIM...



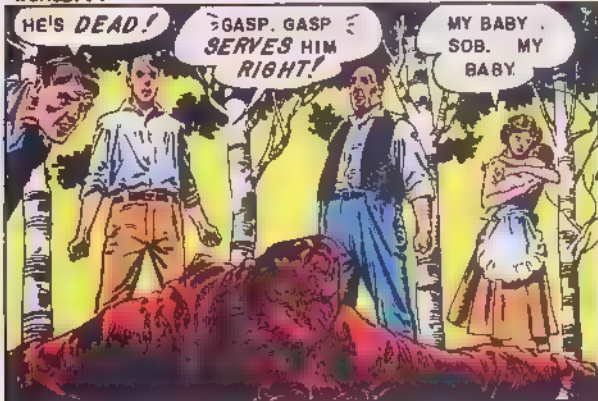
DOORS FLEW OPEN. THE MOTHER'S SCREAMS SUCKED PEOPLE FROM THEIR HOUSES...ANGRY MEN, HORRIFIED WOMEN, YOUNG STRONG BOYS. DANIEL RAN...



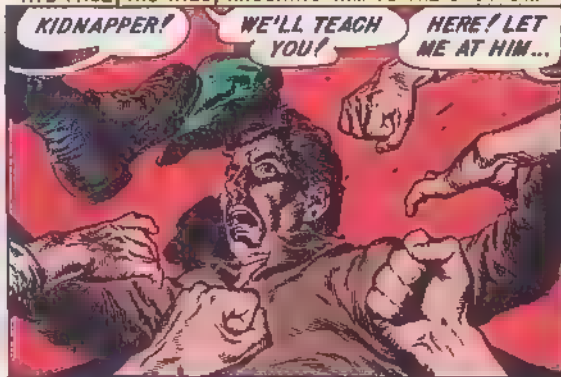
HEAVY FOOTSTEPS...HOARSE SHOUTS OF ANGER...OBSCENITIES THUNDERED AFTER DANIEL. HE RAN, TERRIFIED...THIS WAY...THAT WAY...THEN SUDDENLY FOUND HIMSELF SURROUNDED...



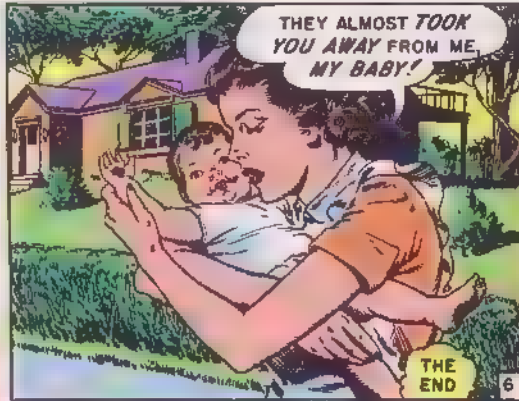
KICKING, STAMPING, PUMMELING...A *STICK* HASTILY SNATCHED AND APPLIED, A *ROCK, FISTS, HEELS*...ANGRY, ANGRY...RAINED DOWN UPON DANIEL. AND HE LAY BACK SENSELESS UNTIL HIS LIFE EBBED AND FADED FROM THIS SENSELESS WORLD...



ANGRY HANDS REACHED OUT...SNATCHING THE BABY FROM HIM. ANGRY FISTS LASHED OUT, CRUNCHING INTO HIS FACE, HIS RIBS, KNOCKING HIM TO THE GROUND...



AND THE MOTHER WHO *COULD* AFFORD THE PRICE CRADLED HER INFANT SON IN HER ARMS AND KISSED HIS CHEEKS, HIS HANDS, THE PALM WITH THE STRANGE BIRTH-MARK THAT LOOKED LIKE A BLOT OF WRITING INK...



THE END

FALL

GUY

THE POLICE SIRENS SHRIEKED TO A STOP FAR BELOW IN THE STREET CANYON, ECHOING OFF THE DARK SILENT BUILDINGS. DANNY LEANED OVER THE PARAPET, GRIMACING. IN A FEW MINUTES THEY'D BE COMING UP AFTER HIM, SHACKLING HIM WITH THEIR SHINY HANDCUFFS, AND DRAGGING HIM BACK TO THE HELL HOLE WHERE HE'D SPENT TEN MISERABLE YEARS... **BACK TO PRISON.** WELL, HE'D HAVE NONE OF *THAT*. DANNY SHOOK HIS HEAD, THE FLASHING NEON LIGHT FROM THE BAR AND GRILL SIGN THAT RAN VERTICALLY UP THE FACE OF THE TENEMENT REFLECTING ON HIS PERSPIRING FACE. HE SCREAMED DOWN AT THE UNIFORMED FIGURES POURING FROM THE SQUAD CARS...

NOT ME, COPPERS! YOU'LL NEVER TAKE ME BACK! NEVER!



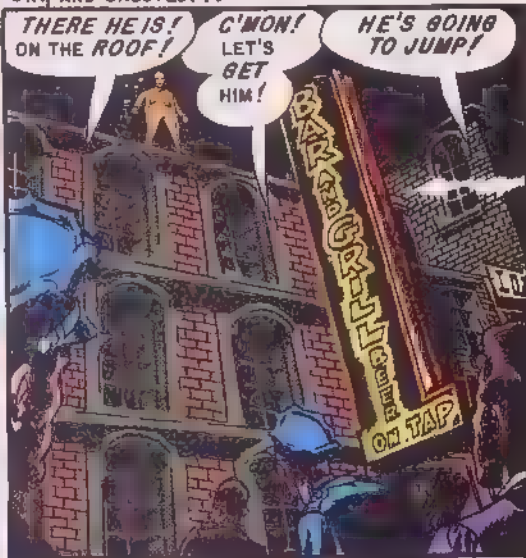
wood.

DANNY CLIMBED ONTO THE PARAPET. SOMEONE IN THE STREET BELOW POINTED UP AT DANNY'S NEON ILLUMINATED FIGURE OUTLINED AGAINST THE NIGHT SKY, AND SHOUTED...

THERE HE IS!
ON THE ROOF!

C'MON!
LET'S
GET
HIM!

HE'S GOING
TO JUMP!



DANNY LOOKED DOWN AT THE GATHERING SEA OF UPTURNED FACES. THE SIGN, RUNNING AWAY DOWN THE BUILDING FACE, FLASHED ON AND OFF... FIRST BATHING HIM IN ITS RED-ORANGE LIGHT... THEN ERASING HIM INTO BLACKNESS. HE SHOOK HIS HEAD...

IT'S ALL OVER. THERE'S NOTHING LEFT TO LIVE FOR. NOTHING.



DANNY STOOD THERE, TEETERING CRAZILY. HE THOUGHT OF **HELEN**, SHRIEKING PAINFULLY IN THE BAR BELOW, WITH THE **KNIFE GASH** OBLITERATING HER ONCE LOVELY FACE IN ONE JAGGED CRIMSON SMEAR...



...AND HE THOUGHT OF **THE MONEY**. **NINETY-THREE THOUSAND DOLLARS**... WAITING QUIETLY IN THAT SAFETY DEPOSIT BOX IN THE BANK VAULT... WAITING... WAITING.



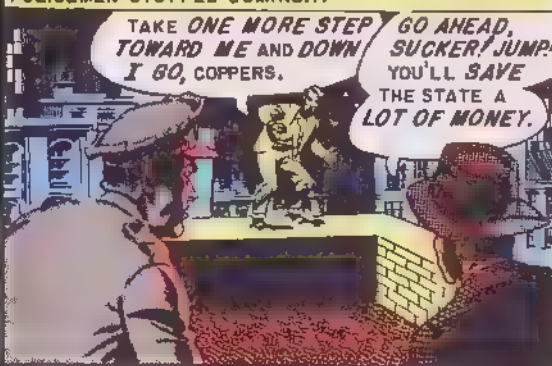
WAITING FOR **WHOM?** DANNY GIGGLED. WHAT **WAS THAT NAME?** IF ONLY HE'D BEEN ABLE TO **REMEMBER THAT NAME**... THE **NAME HE'D GIVEN THEM** WHEN HE'D **RENTED THE BOX**... ALL THIS WOULDN'T HAVE **HAPPENED!** DANNY LOOKED AROUND. FIGURES WERE SPILLING OUT ONTO THE ROOF NOW...



DANNY MADE A MOVEMENT AS IF TO JUMP. THE POLICEMEN STOPPED COMING...

TAKE **ONE MORE STEP TOWARD ME AND DOWN I GO, COPPERS.**

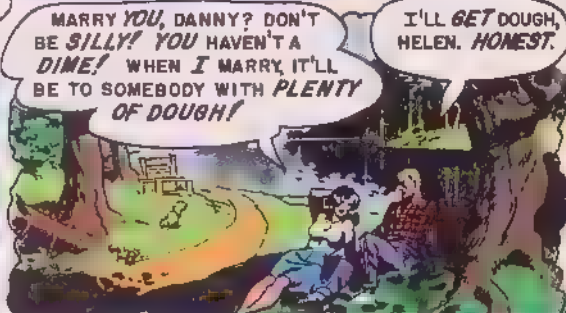
GO AHEAD, SUCKER! JUMP! YOU'LL **SAVE THE STATE A LOT OF MONEY.**



NINETY-THREE THOUSAND DOLLARS! IT WAS A LOT OF MONEY. DANNY STOOD THERE IN THE FLASHING LIGHT OF THE BAR'S NEON SIGN, REMEMBERING WHY HE'D **NEEDED** SO MUCH MONEY...

MARRY YOU, DANNY? DON'T BE **SILLY!** YOU HAVEN'T A **DIME!** WHEN I MARRY, IT'LL BE TO SOMEBODY WITH **PLENTY OF DOUGH!**

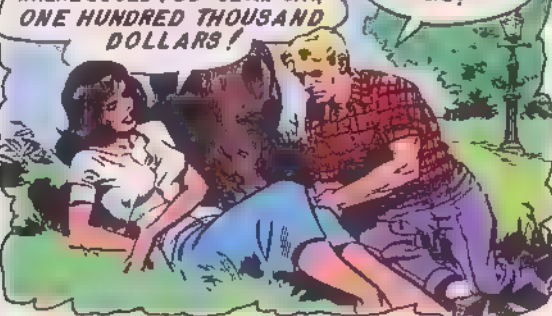
I'LL **GET DOUGH, HELEN. HONEST.**



DANNY REMEMBERED HOW HELEN HAD LAUGHED AT HIM...

YOU... **GET DOUGH!**? DON'T BE **RIDICULOUS!** WHERE CAN A TWO-BIT **HOTEL CLERK** GET THE KIND OF DOUGH I WANT? WHERE COULD YOU GET... SAY, **ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS!**

I'LL **GET IT, HELEN.** YOU'LL **SEE, THEN,** WILL YOU MARRY ME?



... HOW SHE'D SMILED AT HIM, **PATting HIS CHEEK.**

BABY, I'D MARRY **ANYBODY** WITH A **HUNDRED GRAND. ANYBODY!** EVEN YOU?

I **LOVE YOU, HELEN.** I LOVE YOU **SO MUCH,** I'D DO **ANYTHING** FOR YOU.



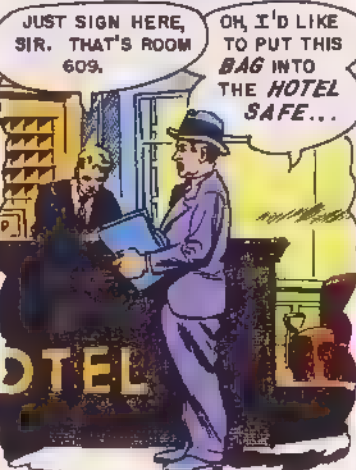
DANNY TEETERED ON THE PARAPET. THE UNIFORMED FIGURES MOVED CAUTIOUSLY TOWARD HIM...



YOU'RE GOING BACK TO STIR, JANSEN. SLASHIN' THAT DAME WILL PUT YOU AWAY FOR A LONG TIME...

YOU'RE NOT PUTTIN' ME ANYWHERE, COPPER! STAY BACK!

DANNY REMEMBERED THE DAY THE DAPPER-LOOKING GUY HAD COME INTO THE HOTEL WITH THE LITTLE BLACK BAG UNDER HIS ARM...



JUST SIGN HERE, SIR. THAT'S ROOM 609.

OH, I'D LIKE TO PUT THIS BAG INTO THE HOTEL SAFE...

HE REMEMBERED HOW HE'D TAKEN THE BAG, AND HOW HE'D ALMOST DROPPED IT, AS THE DAPPER GUY ANNOUNCED...



CAREFUL WITH THAT, SON. THERE'S CLOSE TO ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS IN CASH IN THAT BAG.

Y-Y-YES, SIR.

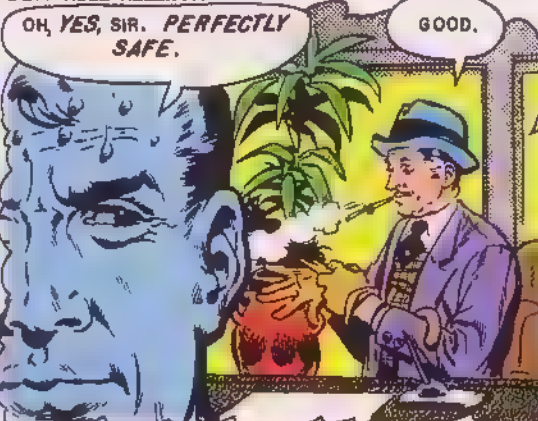
THE DAPPER GUY'D BEEN A DEALER IN DIAMONDS. HE'D COME TO TOWN TO MAKE SOME PURCHASES FOR CLIENTS. DANNY PUT THE BAG INTO THE HOTEL SAFE...



ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS... CHOKO...

YOU'RE SURE THAT WILL BE SAFE THERE, SON?

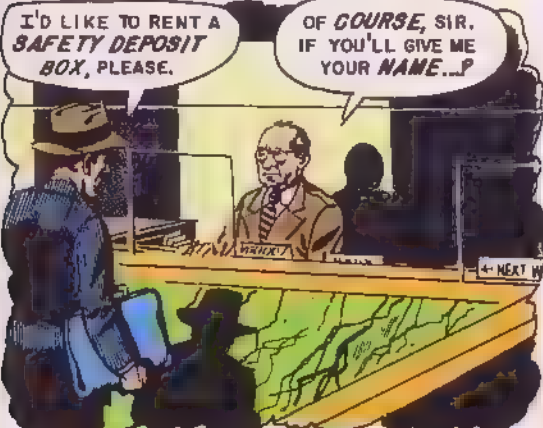
DANNY'D SMILED, THINKING OF HELEN... BEAUTIFUL, DESIRABLE HELEN...



OH, YES, SIR. PERFECTLY SAFE.

GOOD.

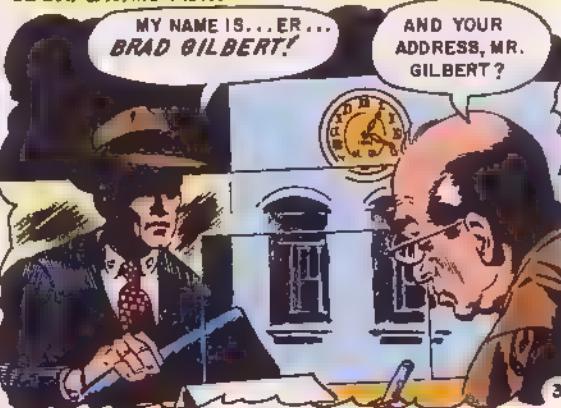
DANNY REMEMBERED HOW HE'D TAKEN THE BAG FROM THE SAFE AND RUSHED ACROSS TOWN TO A BANK...



I'D LIKE TO RENT A SAFETY DEPOSIT BOX, PLEASE.

OF COURSE, SIR. IF YOU'LL GIVE ME YOUR NAME...

THAT WAS IT. THAT WAS THE ONLY THING DANNY COULD NOT REMEMBER NOW. HE'D GIVEN A FALSE NAME SO THAT WHEN AND IF HE WERE CAUGHT, THE MONEY WOULD BE SAFE...WAITING...



MY NAME IS...ER... BRAD GILBERT!

AND YOUR ADDRESS, MR. GILBERT?

THEN HE'D GONE TO HELEN...

YOU SAID YOU'D **MARRY ME** IF I GOT A HUNDRED GRAND. WELL I'VE GOT IT.

WHAT!? AM I CAN IT, DANNY. I'M NOT IN THE MOOD FOR JOKES.

THIS IS **NO JOKE**, HELEN, I STOLE **ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS** AND I HID IT IN A **SAFETY DEPOSIT BOX** UNDER A **PHONY NAME**.

AND YOU EXPECT ME TO **BELIEVE** THAT STORY?

YOU'LL **BELIEVE** IT WHEN THE COPS START **LOOKING** FOR ME, HELEN. JUST **PROMISE ME ONE THING...**

SURE, DANNY. **ANYTHING.**

PROMISE ME YOU'LL **WAIT** FOR ME. THEY'LL **CATCH UP** WITH ME AND I'LL HAVE TO DO SOME **TIME**. PROMISE ME YOU'LL WAIT TILL I GET OUT.

SURE, DANNY. **SURE!**

DANNY REMEMBERED THE COPS COMING TO HIS ROOM...

GET YOUR **COAT**, JANSEN.

THERE'S A LITTLE MATTER OF A **HUNDRED GRAND MISSING FROM A HOTEL SAFE** WE'D LIKE TO TALK OVER WITH YOU.

...THEIR INCESSANT QUESTIONING...

WHAT DID YOU DO WITH THE **DOUGH**, JANSEN?

TELL US WHERE YOU **HID IT**, DANNY! **I FOR-GOT, COPPERS!**

...HIS SENTENCING...

BECAUSE YOU HAVE **PERSISTANTLY REFUSED** TO DIVULGE WHERE YOU HAVE **HIDDEN** THE MONEY YOU STOLE, I SENTENCE YOU TO THE **MAXIMUM JAIL TERM** ALLOWED BY LAW, DANIEL JANSEN... **16 YEARS IN THE STATE PENITENTIARY...**

...AND DANNY REMEMBERED HELEN'S LAST MOMENTS WITH HIM BEFORE HE WAS TAKEN AWAY.

TELL ME THE **NAME**, DANNY.. **WAIT** FOR ME. WITH THE **NAME** YOU USED WHEN YOU **RENTED** THE BOX.

SORRY, HELEN. YOU **WAIT** FOR ME. WITH **TIME OFF** FOR **GOOD BEHAVIOR**, I'LL BE **OUT** IN **TEN YEARS**. THEN IT'LL BE **GLOVER** FOR US.

DANNY STOOD ON THE PARAPET...

BETTER COME DOWN, DANNY.

STAY BACK, COPPERS. **STAY BACK...**



DANNY REMEMBERED THOSE MISERABLE YEARS IN JAIL, COUNTING THE ENDLESS DAYS AND SAYING THE NAME OVER AND OVER IN HIS MIND... THE NAME HE'D USED WHEN HE'D RENTED THE SAFETY DEPOSIT BOX... **THE NAME HE'D FORGOTTEN...**

**BRAD GILBERT...
BRAD GILBERT...**



FOR TEN YEARS, DANNY'D WAITED FOR THAT MOMENT. HELEN WAS OUT THERE... OUTSIDE THE GATES... WAITING FOR HIM...

BABY!

**LET'S GO, DANNY!
LET'S PICK UP THE
DOUGH AND HEAD
FOR MEXICO!**



HE REMEMBERED THE DRIVE BACK TO TOWN... TO THE BANK...

YES, SIR?

**I RENTED A
SAFETY DEPOSIT
BOX SEVERAL YEARS
AGO. I PAID FOR
IT IN ADVANCE.
I'D LIKE TO HAVE
IT OPENED...**



HE REMEMBERED HOW THE BANK CLERK HAD HANDED HIM THE FORM...

OF COURSE,
SIR. JUST SIGN
YOUR NAME!

MY... MY
NAME!?



IT WAS **OZZY!** EVERY DAY FOR TEN YEARS HE'D SAID THAT NAME TO HIMSELF. BUT **THERE**, IN THE **BANK**, WITH THE **CLERK** WAITING AND **HELEN** WAITING AND THE **DOTTED LINE** ON THE FORM WAITING, DANNY'D DRAW A **BLANK**... A **COMPLETE LOSS OF MEMORY**...

**DANNY! SIGN THE
NAME! THE NAME
YOU USED!**

**I... I... OH, MY GOD!
I CAN'T REMEMBER IT!**



DANNY REMEMBERED HOW HELEN HAD PLEADED WITH HIM...

**THINK, DANNY! THINK!
WHAT DID IT SOUND LIKE?
WAS IT A COMMON NAME?
A BALL-PLAYER. A...**

**SHUT UP,
HELEN.
THE CLERK..**

**JUST SIGN
YOUR NAME,
SIR. IS THERE
ANYTHING
WRONG?**



AND THEN, THAT LONG AWAITED DAY... THE DAY THE PRISON GATES SWUNG OPEN AND HE PASSED THROUGH THEM, A FREE MAN...

GOOD LUCK, DANNY!

THANKS, WARDEN.



DANNY'D MADE A LAME EXCUSE...
I'LL BE BACK.
I FORGOT SOME
IMPORTANT
PAPERS THAT
I WANT TO PUT
IN...

OF COURSE,
SIR.

THEY'D WALKED FOR HOURS... HE
AND HELEN... SHE, PRODDING HIM,
QUESTIONING, INSULTING, ALMOST
SCREAMING AT TIMES... AND HE,
RACKING HIS TORTURED BRAIN...

FOR GOD'S SAKE,
DANNY! HOW COULD
YOU FORGET ANY-
THING AS IMPORTANT
AS THAT? WAS IT
'SMITH'... 'JONES'...
'DANIELS'...?
THINK!

NO! NO!
LAY OFF
ME, WILL
YOU?

THEY'D ENDED UP TIGHT UNDER
THE BAR-AND-GRILL SIGN...

I'M HUNGRY!

LET'S GO
IN HERE.



THEY'D SAT IN THE BAR AND HELEN'D FUMED...

TEN YEARS I'VE WASTED...
WAITING FOR A DUMB CREEP
TO FORGET THE NAME HE
USED WHEN HE HID ONE
HUNDRED GRAND!

FOR CRYIN' OUT
LOUD, HELEN.
HAVE SOME PITY
ON ME. I'M TRYIN'.

DANNY REMEMBERED HOW SHE'D SCREAMED...

HAVE PITY ON YOU!? WHAT ABOUT ME!?
WHAT ABOUT ALL THE CHANCES I PASSED
UP... WAITING FOR YOU... WAITING FOR YOU
TO GET OUT SO I COULD GET MY HANDS
ON THAT DOUGH!? I NEVER GAVE A
HOOT ABOUT YOU. IT WAS THE
DOUGH... THE DOUGH...

HELEN...



LOOK AT ME! I'M ALMOST
FORTY! WHAT CHANGE
HAVE I GOT TO FIND
ANOTHER SUCKER? YOU
WERE IT! AND NOW YOU
PULL A ROTTEN TRICK
LIKE THIS! THINK OF
THAT NAME, DANNY.
THINK!

SHUT
UP,
HELEN!

I WON'T SHUT UP!
MAKE ME! MAKE
ME SHUT UP,
YOU DUMB
GREEP!

I SAID,
SHUT UP,
HELEN!

AND DANNY REMEMBERED PICKING UP
THE SERRATED STEAK KNIFE...

MAKE ME, YOU LAME-
BRAINED IDIOT...
YOU... YOU...
DANNY!



DANNY GIGGLED ON THE PARAPET AS HE REMEMBERED SLASHING OUT AT HELEN...SLICING ACROSS HER JAWING MOUTH...AND THE BLOOD SPURTING, AS THE SAW-TOOTHED KNIFE CUT DEEP...

STAND BACK, COPPERS!
SHE'S DEAD, DANNY! SHE SAID SOMETHING ABOUT A NAME BEFORE SHE DIED! WHAT NAME?



THE LIGHT FROM THE FLASHING NEON SIGN COLORED DANNY'S FACE INTO A SATANIC MASK...

THERE'S A HUNDRED GRAND IN A SAFETY DEPOSIT BOX, COPPERS. I HAD IT UNDER A PHONY NAME. AND I FORGOT THE NAME... D'YA HEAR? I FORGOT IT!

BETTER COME DOWN, DANNY!



DANNY SCREAMED...
NOT ME, COPPERS! I AIN'T GOT NOTHIN' LEFT TO LIVE FOR. NO NAME... NO DOUGH... NO GIRL...

STOP HIM!



DANNY LEAPED. HIS SCREAM ECHOED DOWN INTO THE STREET CANYON...HE SMASHED AGAINST THE SIGN, CLUTCHING AT THE NEON LETTERS, RIPPING THEM AWAY AS HE PLUNGED...



NEON TUBES EXPLODED...HISSED...SPLINTERED AS HE FELL AGAINST THEM...DOWN...DOWN...



...AND JUST BEFORE HIS SIGHT LEFT HIM AND HIS LIFE SLIPPED AWAY AS HE LAY CRUSHED AND BROKEN ON THE SIDEWALK BELOW THE SIGN, DANNY LOOKED UP AND SAW THE WORK HIS FALLING BODY HAD DONE...



THERE, OUTLINED IN FLASHING ORANGE AGAINST THE BLACK NIGHT, WAS THE NAME DANNY'D FORGOTTEN.

THE END...